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FM AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0085
INFO RUEHGZ/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE 0037
RUEHGZ/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC 0037
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC 0037
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC 0004
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP/ISA/AP// 0001
RHMFISS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC//J2/J3/J5//
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J00/J2/J3/J5// 0004
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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP
HHS PASS TO OGHA, NIH/FIC, CDC/COGH AND FLU DIV TMOUNTS AND NCOX
USDA PASS TO APHIS, FAS (OSTA AND OCRA), FSIS
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID
BEIJING FOR HHS HEALTH ATTACHE AND RMO

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: INFANT CONTRACTS AVIAN INFLUENZA A (H9N2) VIRUS IN
SHENZHEN, HOSPITALIZED IN HONG KONG

¶1. Summary: An eleven-week old girl who resides in Shenzhen has reportedly contracted avian influenza A (H9N2) virus. She is being treated in a Hong Kong hospital. Some medical experts have expressed concern that avian influenza A (H9N2) virus - which has only been documented in a low pathogenic form, compared to highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N1) virus - might have mutated because the girl did not initially exhibit a fever. Shenzhen officials are investigating the source of the infection, but have not yet released any findings. End summary.

¶2. According to media reports, an eleven-week old girl living in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, contracted avian influenza A (H9N2) virus and is now being treated at Tuen Mun Hospital in Hong Kong. The girl was born in Hong Kong, and her parents took her to Tuen Mun Hospital on December 22 after she exhibited coughing and vomiting. Because she had no fever, the hospital did not suspect AI after her first admission. She was discharged the next day and returned with her parents to Shenzhen. Her parents took her back to Tuen Mun Hospital on December 29, after which blood tests determined she was infected with avian influenza A (H9N2) virus. Avian influenza A (H9N2) virus has only been documented in a low pathogenic form, compared to highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N1) virus. Media reports indicate she is in stable condition, but still has an elevated white blood cell count, which doctors suspect may be due to causes other than the avian influenza A (H9N2) virus infection. They are testing her for leukemia.

¶3. Medical experts are reportedly concerned that the avian influenza A (H9N2) virus may have mutated because the girl did not initially develop a fever. Hong Kong and Guangdong health officials have been in contact with each other to speed investigation of the infection source.

¶4. Shenzhen officials have sent a team to investigate the residential area in Shenzhen's Nansha District, where the patient lives, and indicated they would release an update when more information is available. They advised local residents to reduce contact with live poultry. The patient's doctor in Hong Kong told reporters that the family did not raise chickens and that other members of the family have not displayed any symptoms of contracting the virus.

15. This cable was coordinated with Embassy Beijing and Consulate General Hong Kong.

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